Update on Biennial Reports

Professional Services Division
January 2009

Overview of the Report
This item discusses the first year of implementation of the biennial report component under the new *Accreditation Framework* adopted by the Commission in December 2007. The first three cohorts of program sponsors were required to submit biennial reports by either: August 15, October 15, or December 15, 2008. The data that was to be included is for the 2007-08 academic year.

This agenda item provides a progress report on the biennial reports submitted, the staff review process, and the types of feedback provided to institutions. It is expected that at the April meeting of the COA, an additional agenda item will be developed on this topic that will provide a greater level of detail about the kinds of data submitted by institutions. It is expected that at the April meeting, the COA will have an opportunity to discuss whether the first year of implementation has met the original objectives of the biennial reporting component intended by the COA and the Accreditation Study Work Group and whether any refinements to the Biennial Report are necessary.

Staff recommendation
This is an information item only.

Background
Under the current accreditation system, biennial reports are due in years 1, 3, and 5 of the 7 year cycle. The purpose of the biennial report is for every approved educator preparation program to demonstrate to the Commission how it utilizes candidate, completer, and program data to guide on-going program improvement activities. In addition, the biennial reports move accreditation away from a "snapshot" approach to accreditation to one in which accreditation is on-going. The biennial report process allows for the recognition that effective practice means program personnel are engaged constantly in the process of analysis of data and program improvement.

The biennial report includes a section in which the institution can briefly describe its educator preparation programs, summarize the number of students and completers in each program, and provide a brief update on changes made to the programs since the last site visit or biennial report was submitted. In addition to candidate and program data, the report also includes a section in which institution leadership identify trends that were observed across programs and describe institutional plans for remedying concerns identified by the data. Program-specific improvement efforts must be aligned to appropriate common or program standards.

Biennial Reports Submitted in Fall 2008
In 2008, program sponsors in the Orange, Green and Violet cohorts were required to submit their first biennial report. Each program offered by an approved institution was required to complete Section A – the program level candidate assessment information. Additionally, each institution

was required to submit a single Section B for the institution as a whole that reflected on the trends across all programs.

The institutions in these three cohorts are listed in the table below:

Institutions Required to Submit Biennial Reports in Fall 2008		
<u>Orange Cohort</u> Cal State TEACH Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo CSU Sacramento Sonoma State University UC Santa Barbara Antioch Santa Barbara Cal Baptist Occidental Saint Mary's College The Master's College University of La Verne University of San Diego University of Phoenix University of the Pacific Butte COE CELA SAIL Santa Barbara COE	<u>Green Cohort</u> CSU Channel Islands CSU East Bay CSU San Bernardino Cal Lutheran Mills College Notre Dame de Namur Patten University Simpson College Western Governors University Westmont College Fresno COE High Tech Learning Community Los Angeles COE San Diego COE San Diego USD	<u>Violet Cohort</u> CSU Fresno UC Davis UC Irvine UC San Diego Antioch Los Angeles Claremont Graduate Hope International La Sierra National University Pacific Oaks College Compton Unified School District Imperial COE Kern COE Salinas Adult

As of the writing of this agenda item, the majority of the institutions have submitted their reports. Some institutions have requested and have been granted reasonable extensions of time due to extenuating circumstances. Typically, these requests have been due to personnel changes or a misunderstanding of deadlines or requirements in this first year of implementation. Staff has been working closely with institutions to ensure the accreditation requirements and deadlines are clear.

In addition, letters have gone out to those institutions submitting biennial reports in the fall of 2009. These include institutions in the Red, Yellow, and Indigo cohorts. One major difference this year is the amount of notification time the Commission was able to provide to this second three cohorts. With the first three cohorts (those required to submit in Fall 2008), notification could not take place until November 2007, when it was clear that the Commission was going to act upon the *Accreditation Framework*, which it subsequently did in December 2007. This gave program sponsors in the first three cohorts less than one full academic year to begin to gather data, analyze the data, and to identify program modifications if necessary. On the other hand, the cohorts submitting in the second year of implementation were sent the notification letter in August 2008, and, as a result, staff believes it has been more successful in being able to follow up with institutions that have not been immediately responsive to the request for its preferred submission date. In addition, staff has had the opportunity to answer questions from institutions

in these cohorts, to encourage individuals to take advantage of opportunities to better understand the requirements and deadlines such as by using the website, and participating in technical assistance meetings and workshops at conferences.

Review Process
Staff is making steady progress is responding to the biennial reports submitted. A copy of the letter and response template that has been used for responses is included to this agenda item as Appendix A. The letters differ slightly for each institution depending upon whether its next accreditation activity is another biennial report (program sponsors in Year 1), program assessment (program sponsors in Year 3), or a site visit (program sponsors in Year 5). In addition, the language in the first summary paragraph differs depending on the nature of the comments. Appendix A is a letter to an institution that was in Year 3 of the cycle and that generally met the Commission's biennial report requirements but for which there are some suggestions for future consideration.

Throughout the last year, staff has indicated that program sponsors should receive timely responses to their submissions. Staff has indicated that "timely" response would be 6-8 weeks after submitting a document. While staff has exceeded this for some institutions, it nevertheless remains committed to timely response. At the meeting, staff will provide a progress report on the numbers of responses completed and the numbers of responses remaining to be completed. Because there are three timeframes for submission, those submitted first are reviewed first. However, staff has determined it is also important to give highest priority for review to those in the 5th year of the cycle, given they are nearing a site visit. Those institutions in Year 3 are then reviewed next so that their report and the response may be provided to the program assessment reviewers.

Prior to the submission of any biennial reports, Commission staff had discussed the review process with the field at a variety of workshops and technical assistance meetings. This review includes a limited review by Commission staff with feedback provided to the institution. Then, the biennial report and the response is shared with the program assessment reviewers and the site visit review team to use as additional information and evidence in determining alignment with standards and, ultimately, with an accreditation recommendation.

Staff reviews each report to ensure:
1) That every institution/program sponsor for which a report was required had submitted a report.
2) That the reports submitted include a Section A for all credential programs approved by the Commission.
3) That information for each part of Section A is included, including contextual information, candidate assessment data, analysis of that data, and a discussion of possible or planned program modifications linked to the data and its analysis.

The template for the feedback form that staff is currently using is attached to the response letter at the end of this agenda item. In addition, in the last column on the right of that form is the standard language used if an institution has provided appropriate candidate data, analyzed that data, and discussed possible/planned program modifications. The standard language reads,

> *"Data, analysis, and program modifications were present, clearly presented, and well linked. Data and analysis supported proposed program modifications. Meets Commission requirements."*

As might be expected, the staff review process goes smoothly when all objectives of the biennial reporting have been clearly met. When these objectives are not as readily apparent, the review becomes more difficult and determining the appropriate level of response in this first year of implementation has been somewhat of a challenge. Staff fully recognizes that it is not part of the BIR and, as such, its role in the review of biennial reports for the purposes of accreditation is limited. However, it is also critical that constructive feedback may determine whether better data and better reporting is provided by the institution in the future. Coming to some understanding of the appropriate balance of these competing objectives has been the goal in drafting comments. It is anticipated that at the COA meeting, staff will share examples of the types of comments used on the feedback form, however, a sampling is provided in the table below.

Staff Analysis of Biennial Report Submission	Examples of Staff Comments
No candidate data is provided and no indication that future biennial reports will contain data; or the focus of the report submitted is only on the process of collecting and using data, but no data for the assessments included in the report	1) The Biennial Report requires that aggregated candidate assessment data and/or program effectiveness data be submitted. Staff did not find this type of data in this program's report. It is expected that in the next Biennial Report, data will be submitted.
	2) Report described numerous assessment tools and process used by the program, however, no aggregated data was submitted for any of the assessment tools used by the program. The Commission expects for the next biennial report the submission of aggregated candidate assessment data for 4-6 key assessments.
No candidate data is provided, however, there is acknowledgement of the lack of data by the institution and program and there is evidence of efforts to begin to develop a candidate assessment system or implement a newly developed system. Staff believes from the report there is a reasonably good chance that candidate assessment data will be submitted in future biennial reports.	1) The Commission commends the institution for its continuing work on the development and implementation of candidate assessments. The Commission looks forward to an update on the progress being made on the development and implementation of the various assessment tools identified in this report in future biennial reports and accreditation activities.
	2) The Commission looks forward to reports on the progress of the development of the assessment tools and the data yielded from these tools during the upcoming site visit and the next biennial report. Meets Commission

Staff Analysis of Biennial Report Submission	Examples of Staff Comments
	requirements.
	3) The Commission commends the institution on the continued development of assessments identified in the report, particularly the development of signature assignments and related rubrics for TaskStream and the development of employer surveys, and looks forward to the inclusion of data from these assessments in future biennial reports.
Logical linkages between the data provided and analysis and program modifications are difficult to see or understand.	Data and program modifications were present, but it wasn't clear how the data were used to arrive at the program modifications.
Data includes only post-program effectiveness data and no candidate assessment data for candidates while enrolled in the program.	Some aggregated data on candidate completers is present, analyzed and program modifications are evident. However, this data is limited in nature to post program information and no data on candidate competence assessments (while candidates are enrolled in the program) are provided.
	<u>Considerations for Future Submissions</u> Additional aggregated data should be provided in future reports to demonstrate how the program collects, analyzes, and utilizes candidate assessment data for programmatic improvement. The narrative clearly references several excellent sources currently used by the program– candidate learning portfolios, periodic field experience evaluations, and final field experience evaluations. The Commission encourages the program to submit aggregated data from some of these sources, or other like sources, in the next biennial report and at the time of the site visit.

Challenges

Perhaps the greatest challenge in the biennial report review process has been the staff time necessary to review and respond to the reports. Staff believes it is critical to provide institutions submitting biennial reports for the first time with some constructive comments that may help guide them for future submissions. Because this is a new component it is not yet well understood by all, providing some guidance at this point in time should lead to better reports in the future. Staff anticipates that the time devoted will decrease as staff has more experience reviewing a wide range of reports and as program sponsors learn how to most effectively and efficiently respond to the biennial report requirement.

Another challenge has been working with those programs not previously in the accreditation system, such as those local education agencies offering Designated Subjects programs. Staff will be working closely with these institutions to ensure that there is greater clarity in the future about the Commission's accreditation system.

Posting Model Reports
As staff reviews the biennial reports, it is identifying those it believes are particularly effective at meeting the original objectives of the biennial reporting process as envisioned by the COA and the Accreditation Study Work Group. In the coming months, some of these reports will be posted on the Commission's website as models for others to review and better understand the intent and requirement of the biennial report process. Permission is first sought from the program sponsor and only if permission is given will the report be posted. In addition, the Commission staff is seeking examples across credential areas.

Technical Assistance Meetings
Staff held two technical assistance meetings in the fall of 2008 that were attended by approximately 65 individuals. One was held at Chapman University and the other was held at the Commission offices in Sacramento with some participants participating via webcast. An additional technical assistance meeting is scheduled at the Commission offices on February 18, 2009. Participants may choose to participate in person or via webcast at this meeting. In addition, staff responds daily to e-mail inquiries about the biennial reporting process.

Next Steps
At the April COA meeting, staff will prepare an agenda item that summarizes the first year of implementation of the biennial report process. This agenda item will include a summary of the types of data submitted for each credential area and summary of the staff analysis of those submissions. Discussion time will be allotted to allow the COA to identify whether the biennial reporting process is meeting the overall objectives intended by COA and the Accreditation Study Work Group. In addition, any refinements can be considered and discussed at that time.

Also in the spring, the Commission staff intends to survey those individuals who participated in the first year of implementation of the biennial report process to gather input about the process. This information will be critical in determining the future course of the biennial report process and is an integral part of the overall evaluation of the accreditation system.

COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING
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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR BIENNIAL REPORT RESPONSES
STAFF REVIEW

December 25, 2008

Dean/Superintendent
XXX
XXX
XXX, CA 12345

Dear Dean/Superintendent XXX:

Thank you for your timely submission of your institution's biennial report. The Commission staff has had an opportunity to review your submission and is pleased to report that, in general, the report meets the Commission's requirement for the first submission of the biennial report for accreditation of educator preparation programs.

As you know each institution is responsible for submitting candidate assessment and program effectiveness data. This data must: 1) be submitted for each program approved by the CTC, 2) include an analysis of that data, and 3) identify program improvements or modifications that would be instituted to address areas of concern identified by the analysis of that data. Staff review of the reports ensures that the above three criteria are met.

Attached to this letter is a table that summarizes the Commission's comments on the review of your first biennial report. The first column indicates the CTC-approved program offered by your institution, the next column lists the types of data your institution submitted for each program, and the next two columns indicate whether the required information was submitted for each of the programs offered. A checkmark indicates completion. The final column includes specific comments about the information submitted and indicates whether additional information is required or suggested for your next biennial report or accreditation activity.

The information provided by your institution in the biennial reports will be maintained by the Commission and provided to the reviewers assigned to your site visit review team. In addition, because your next accreditation activity is program assessment, this information will be shared with the program assessment reviewers as additional evidence to determine whether the institution and your programs are appropriately aligned to the standards particularly those program standards related to candidate competence. In addition, it will also be provided to your

site visit team in the future as additional evidence to consider in determining whether there is sufficient alignment with standards, in particular Common Standards 2 and 9. In addition, a summary of the information from the Biennial Reports will be shared with the Committee on Accreditation.

The Commission would like to thank you for your efforts in preparing this report. We understand that this is a new component of the accreditation system and that the time to complete this in this first year of implementation has been significant for many institutions. It is an expectation that the submission of subsequent biennial reports will build upon the significant progress you have already made and become more routine as information systems are maintained and expectations are clarified. In addition, the accreditation system assumes that review of candidate and program effectiveness data are/or will become embedded in and part of your institution's evaluation and assessment processes and not an additional activity external to those efforts.

If you have any questions about this report, or any aspect of the Biennial Report process, please contact Cheryl Hickey at chickey@ctc.ca.gov or Rebecca Parker, rparker@ctc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Teri Clark
Administrator of Accreditation

cc: Any Program Directors/Faculty Chairs listed in submission cover sheets

TEMPLATE FOR BIENNIAL REPORT RESPONSE
Name of Institution
Biennial Report Response, Fall 2008

Credential/Certificate Program	Candidate/Program Data Submitted	Data Analyzed	Program Modifications/ Improvements Made/Discussed	Comments/Additional Information Required
Multiple Subject Multiple Subject Intern Single Subject Single Subject Intern	Data submitted: Listed here Other assessments Listed Each is listed here	√	√	Data, analysis, and program modifications were present, clearly presented, and well linked. Data and analysis supported proposed program modifications. Meets Commission requirements.
Education Specialist MM, Intern M/S				
PPS: School Counseling				
Administrative Services Credential				
California Teachers of English Learners (CTEL)				
Part B. Institutional Summary and Plan of Action				Meets Commission requirements.